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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6171  
INFO RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO 0212  
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 6747  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0328  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 7598  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2017  
TAGS: KDEM MASS PGOV PINR PINS MR  
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH NATIONAL SECURITY CHIEF

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES CHARLES H. TWINING FOR REASON 1.4 (B,D)  
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¶1. (C) Charge and EmbOff called on Director General of National Security Colonel Mohamed Ould Cheikh Mohamed Ahmed, aka Colonel Ghazwany, February 7. Joined by the Director General of State Security, Commissioner Taleb Abeidi Mohamed Abdelahi, Colonel Ghazwany said he understood the principled reasons why the U.S. has kept its distance since the August 3, 2005 coup (of which he was one of the leaders), though he explained that at the time no one could figure out a better way to get a change of leadership that was stuck in place than through such a move. He said he appreciated the degree of cooperation that exists between us and expressed his hope that it would increase following the end of the transition.

¶2. (C) Commenting on the present situation, Ghazwani said he believes it is going in the right direction, that President Vall's insistence on transparency and neutrality is genuine and that they themselves are looking forward to the turnover of power. The Colonel asserted that no candidate is being supported. He thought that all the candidates are serious. He said he was pleased that the candidates themselves had met to agree on a code of conduct, and we added our pleasure that they and the military would soon be sitting down together to talk.

¶3. (C) From the point of view of security, Ghazwani said that any internal problems were being handled by the police, and his services were especially focused on any threats orchestrated from outside. While he saw no particular security problems on the horizon, he also thought it made sense to keep a careful eye on things now, during the election period in March, and in the post-election period leading to the turnover of power. One hoped there would not be "sore losers" whose followers would cause trouble, nor others who would take advantage of the period of transition to create incidents, but the security services would remain vigilant, the Colonel added.

¶4. (C) Charge expressed our hope to increase our cooperation of all kinds following the start of a new government. Ghazwani acknowledged that Mauritania had never had a peaceful transfer of power, and Mauritanians wanted to make this one work. We said we thought it important that civilians understand the role of the military in a government and work together with it, while military elements refrain from leading any further coups d'etat. Ghazwany agreed with both points. He said he looked forward to our expanding relationship in the future.

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